Communities (EC) have initiated separate dispute settlement proceedings against India in the matter of the consistency or otherwise of India's patents regime with India's obligations under the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs Agreement). In its report on the dispute with the USA, the panel has found that India has not complied with its obligations under Article 70.8 (a) or Article 63(1) and (2) and Article 70.9 of the TRIPS Agreement. Following India's notification to appeal on certain aspects of the report, review by the Appellate Body of the WTO is underway. In respect of the dispute with the EC, the examination by the panel is underway.

In the matter of the quantitative restrictions on imports maintained by India for balance of payments purposes, Australia, Canada, the EC, New Zealand, Switzerland and USA have initiated separate dispute settlement proceedings against India. Japan has joined these disputes as an interested third party. Pursuant to formal consultations under the dispute settlement process, mutually agreed solutions have been reached with the EC and with Switzerland. Negotiations towards formalisation of mutually agreed solutions with Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Japan are expected to the concluded shortly. Since formal consultations with USA did not result in a mutually satisfactory settlement of differences, a panel has been formed on 18 November, 1997 to examine the US allegation underlying this dispute.

In respect of the disputes initiated by India against WTO Member countries, which are in varying stages of the dispute settlement process, outstanding among them are the dispute with Turkey in the matter of the quantitative restrictions imposed by Turkey on imports from India of a broad range of textiles products, and the joint dispute initiated by India along with Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand against USA on the ban on imports into USA of shrimp and products from shrimp harvested in the wild using commercial fishing technology that does not safeguard endangered species of sea turtles.

Export of Marine Products

608. SHRI SHYAM LAL BANSHIWAL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the export of marine products have shown an upward trend during 1996–97;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the country to which the export of marine products was maximum; and

(d) the foreign exchange earned therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The exports of marine products in the year 1996–97 as compared to the year 1995–96 have been as under:

	1996–97	1995–96
Quantity : exported (MT)	378199	296277
Value (Rs. crores) :	4121.36	3501.11
Value ($ Million) :	1152.83	1111.46

(c) and (d) In the year 1996–97, India exported maximum marine products to Japan, fetching a value of Rs. 1886.04 crores (US $ 527.56 Million).

(Source: MPEDA)

Trade with Pakistan

609. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to expand trade with Pakistan by opening land routes through Wagha and Atari border;

(b) if so, whether Government have considered the implications involved in the land route trade from the point of its vulnerability to smugglers and militants; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c) Requests from Indian trade and industry for opening up of land route through Wagha-Atari border for overland trade with Pakistan are being examined, in the first place, in consultation with all concerned Government agencies.

Regional Handloom Development Centres

610 SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to setup Regional Handioom Development Centres in different parts of the Country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) and (b) No, Sir, The Government does not propose to set up Regional Handloom Development Centres. However, under the scheme of Handloom Development Centres, the Government has provided central grant of Rs. 81.64 crores to various States Govts. to set up 1604 Handlooom Development Centres through Primary Handloom Weavers Cooperative Societies.